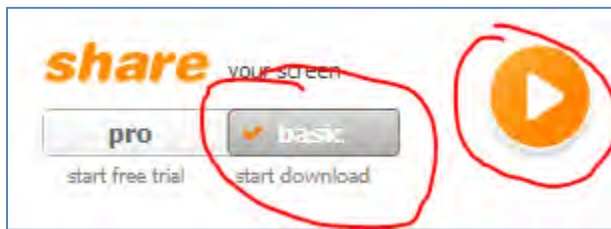


Have you ever been on the phone with one or more colleagues and wished they could see your computer screen? Perhaps you're editing a document together, or you're taking notes for a meeting, or you're discussing the value of some webpage. [Join.me](http://join.me) is a free and easy way to make that happen. You connect to Join.me, then give your colleagues the URL that is generated. When they follow it, they see your desktop. Live, in their web browser. It's as simple as that.

Go to <http://join.me>, and click 'basic'. That is the free version of this service. Then click on the arrow icon.



Join.me will download to your computer. Run it, and the Join.me icon will be added as a shortcut to your desktop.



To share your desktop, double-click on your new Join.me icon.

When I connect to Join.me, this is the toolbar I get. At the very top is a URL. That's the URL that others will use to connect to my computer, but only as long as I'm connected for that session. If you went to that URL now, you'd get an "invalid code" error on the Join.me website. Every time you start a new session, you get a new code. Whatever the URL is for you, email it to whomever you'd like to see your computer screen right now.



Once your colleague begins viewing your desktop, the chat icon is made available since there is now someone to chat with, and a '2' appears on the chest of the person icon to show that there are now two people present, you and your colleague.



For communication, you have a few options.

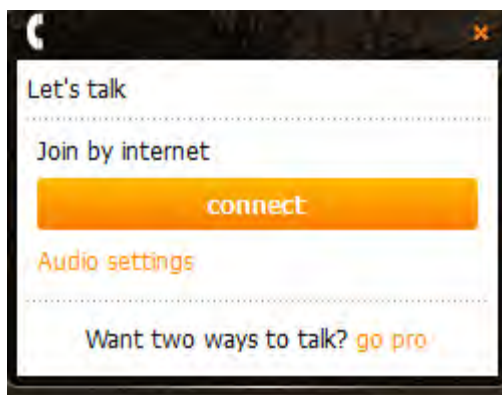
Audio: You can talk on the phone using your own conference call setup. If you don't have conference calling, check out [FreeConference.com](http://FreeConference.com).

Or if you have earphones or a headset with a microphone, you can use Join.me's built-in audio. If you don't have a headset, you can get decent ones for \$20; for example, <http://goo.gl/Av1R5>.

Question: "I have a microphone and speakers built into my laptop. Can't I just use those instead of a headset?"

Answer: "Unfortunately, no. The sound will be fine for you, but your colleagues will hear an echo of themselves. When they speak, the sound coming out of your speakers will be picked up by your microphone and sent back to them. Using headphones will keep your colleagues from hearing themselves through your computer. If you need to buy headphones, you might as well get a headset with a built-in mic. You will sound better.

Clicking the phone icon (same for those connected to your desktop), gives you (and them) this popup. Click 'connect' to turn on the microphone.



Chat: There's a built in chat window. If you have it closed, you'll get a popup when a new chat entry is made. I wouldn't want to have an entire meeting using chat, but it's a helpful addition to a phone call.

Clicking the center button will freeze your screen for everyone else while you do stuff you don't want them to see. Click it again to go live. If you have more than one monitor, the little down arrow below this icon lets you choose which monitor you are sharing.

The person icon shows you who all is viewing your desktop. Each person comes in as "Viewer #," except for you. You're "Presenter." Participants and presenter can click the person icon, then click on the top viewer (that's them) to change their name to something more descriptive, like "Bob." You can have up to 250 participants. I think that's more than sufficient. That's a lot of Bobs.

The mouse icon, when other participants are present, lets you give control of your desktop to a participant in the room. For example, if you're editing a document, and someone has a clear idea of how to word something, give them control of your desktop and just let them do it. For the participants in your meeting, they can click on their mouse icon to request control of your computer. Of course you don't have to grant it.

If someone is ticking you off, kick them out. Click the person icon and click the x next to their name.

## **Mobile**

The Join.me mobile app for Android and iOS can be used to view someone else's screen, but you cannot use it to share your screen.

## **Try it out**

Do it now. Go to [Join.me](http://Join.me). Click on 'basic'. Download the Join.me program. Install it, then run it. Find a free colleague, friend, family member, or stranger off the street, and give them your Join.me URL. Play around with the features. Once you're comfortable, you're ready to use it for your next conference call.

[A version of this article first appeared as a blog post at [SueFrantz.com](http://SueFrantz.com).]